

TRANSCRIPT

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Inquiry into motorcycle safety

Melbourne — 18 October 2011

Members

Mr A. Elsbury

Mr T. Languiller

Mr J. Perera

Mr M. Thompson

Mr B. Tilley

Chair: Mr M. Thompson

Deputy Chair: Mr T. Languiller

Staff

Executive Officer: Ms K. Jenkins

Research Officer: Mr J. Aliferis

Witnesses

OPEN FORUM

Mr J. Karmouche;

Mr G. Blore;

Mr P. Lemin, Accident Scene Management Australia;

Mr N. Mastoris;

Mr L. Park;

Mr B. Tassigiannakis;

Mr D. Codognotto, Independent Riders Group;

Mr S. Lennard, chairman, Australian Motorcycle Council; and

Mr M. Zammit.

The CHAIR — We will resume proceedings in the Victorian Parliament's Road Safety Committee's inquiry into motorcycle safety and related matters. Hansard will be recording the comments made, and you will get a copy of the record, which you are invited to correct for typographical errors and then return. I ask people to state their name, their address if they are comfortable doing so and also their occupational area of interest if it is appropriate. Your names and contact particulars may be sufficient for our immediate purposes.

Each person will get 10 minutes as part of this public forum process. It is my intention to give a warning at 8 minutes. For those people who are able to get their comments out within 10 minutes, there may be scope to put some questions as well. For any extensive commentary we can, by arrangement, make other avenues available for submission and commentary through email or other means. I thank the committee staff for their good work in bringing this idea to fruition with an after-hours hearing to try to put some more ideas on the record.

The first person I call — we have a few people — is John Karmouche, who has been with us for the last few days. I invite him to come forward first. The 10 minutes will commence in half a minute. I trust that acoustically everyone can hear. I do not envisage it will be a difficulty with John speaking at the outset. He drives a Harley Davidson, and I think he will have voice projection with the right level of revs. Over to you, John.

Mr KARMOUCHE — I will rely on my military background to do that. My occupation involves interfacing with the general public in introducing them to motorcycle rides through what I call a Harley Ride. I give members of the public an experience of what it is like to be on a motorcycle. The information I can bring to the committee is that the general public as a whole are quite ignorant of what riding a motorcycle is all about. I often find that their perceptions versus reality are direct opposites. I attribute this to the fact that very little has been done in relation to motorcycle safety over the last 20 years. This committee is taking a big step in that direction. I have chosen not to make a formal presentation because a lot of what I would have said or written has been included in other presentations that have been made to you, and I endorse quite a few of those.

The one issue I would like to raise with the committee is the issue of connecting with motorcycle riders. I believe this is something government bodies are doing particularly badly, and I cite the TAC as the first example. The way the TAC is doing it is by designing a message — and the message is one that I think most riders agree with — but they are communicating it in the wrong way. They are not communicating it rider to rider. As a motorcycle rider everything I know I have learnt from other riders. I respect what other riders have to say. If you do not ride a motorcycle, I tend not to respect your opinion. I often find that before I take people out for a Harley Ride they make derogatory comments about riding a motorcycle. They say, 'It's dangerous; I'm going to fall off'. They have the perception that as soon as they get on a motorcycle they will be involved in an accident. That is insulting to my experience and demonstrates how ignorant and — I would use these words — how brainwashed the public are by the TAC, by the statistics put out by the police and things like that.

About a year ago the MRA put together a paper *Connecting with Motorcycle Riders* and took it to the TAC. I would like to table that. It was something that I was thinking of making as my submission, but I thought that it was not relevant because a lot of what is in it is contained in other presentations.

We found that when we took the ideas to the TAC they were really not interested in listening to them. I also discovered with the TAC that there are good things happening in other states. New South Wales have a very good campaign based on where to brake when you go into a corner — if you brake here, you will end up there; if you brake a bit later, you will end up running off the road.

In South Australia Mick Doohan was involved in the production of an advertising campaign, which I thought was an experienced rider talking directly to riders. He was somebody that I would have related to. I mentioned it to TAC, and TAC said to me, 'Oh no, our ad is much better than theirs. We think our ad is good'. Honestly, you can ask any rider if they think that the current TAC ad is worthwhile and they will say that they hate it. Basically it insults most riders because a lot of what is in the current TAC ad does not reflect the way that we ride. It certainly does not reflect the way that I ride, and it does not reflect the way that accidents happen.

With that said, I will leave it and throw it over to your questions because I know that I do not have much time.

The CHAIR — Thank you. You have made a posting in relation to the MRA submission which is titled *Connecting with Motorcycle Riders*. How was that submission received by government from your point of view?

Mr KARMOUCHE — We submitted it directly to the TAC. We had a meeting that was attended by Janet Dore, the CEO of TAC, plus members of her staff.

The CHAIR — In a few words, what were the main proposals in the submission?

Mr KARMOUCHE — The main proposals were suggesting ways that they could better utilise rider-to-rider communications, better ways that they could communicate with riders, the sort of language that they could use rider to rider and the way that they utilise clubs and interact with — —

The CHAIR — Do you mean government to rider? What do you mean by rider to rider?

Mr KARMOUCHE — Rider to rider. They could employ riders to actually communicate their message more effectively.

The CHAIR — Okay.

Mr KARMOUCHE — The point that I am making is that any communication with riders must appear as if it comes from a rider to a rider. The TAC in the past have employed hospital surgeons to stand up and make their ads, and it is a doctor saying to a rider, 'You have got to do this and you have got to do that'. But a rider does not tend to look at those people as being as credible as an experienced motorcycle rider.

The CHAIR — Can I get your contact particulars for the record, John? Can the committee have them?

Mr KARMOUCHE — Yes, I will give my card.

The CHAIR — All right. Any other questions please?

Mr TILLEY — I want to pursue with you at a later date your comments in relation to the New South Wales where to brake program and the South Australian Mick Doohan ad. I will get the research officer to get your details and we will pursue that later.

Mr KARMOUCHE — Yes.

Mr ELSBURY — With regard to some of the suggestions that have been made in submissions about having a minimum, mandatory, protective-gear requirement for motorcyclists, I am just wondering how would that impact upon your business.

Mr KARMOUCHE — It would impact on my business. At the moment I provide as a matter of course leather gloves, a protective jacket and a helmet. I provide protective wet-weather trousers that keep them dry, and I require that the passenger wears solid footwear. All the riders that I use in my business are highly qualified and very experienced, and we have got no record of ever having had an accident. In terms of compulsory protective clothing, it would make it difficult for me but not impossible. Again, when it comes to protective clothing I think if you are going to do something then you need to get riders to encourage each other to do it. I believe there are effective ways to do that.

The CHAIR — John, thank you very much for your comments, which will be illuminating for our work. I appreciate your brevity and directness.

Welcome, Graeme. For the purposes of the transcript, could you introduce yourself with your name and contact particulars?

Mr BLORE — My name is Graeme Blore. I can give my address later if that is required. I am an assistant director with the Australian government, working in one of Australia's largest immigration detention centres, so I do come from a professional background. I am also a motorcyclist with 37 years on Victorian roads and before that I was involved in trail riding as well, so I like to think I have a fairly strong level of experience. I also work part time incidentally with John doing part-time Harley Davidson chauffeuring for tourists and various other people around Melbourne and Victoria. That is a little bit of my background.

The reason that I wanted to come and speak with the committee — and I thank you for the opportunity to do so — is simply that I have become quite appalled at what I feel is a highly negative, derogatory and insulting

advertising campaign from the TAC. I find that the campaign is one that puts all of the onus of responsibility onto motorcyclists, with themes such as 'Motorcyclists, it is up to you', and the huge banner headlines you see on a number of freeways that motorcyclists are 38 more times more likely to have serious accident or serious injury. Just as John does, I see them as being a very negative type of campaign. It does nothing whatsoever to actually aid what is ultimately I presume the goal, which is to improve road safety. What I think it actually does is abrogate other road users of any co-responsibility in terms of their sharing the road with motorcyclists.

On a number of occasions in broad daylight anyone here who actually rides a motorcycle can tell you about the number of incidences where they have had extraordinarily close calls. Only by virtue of the fact that over the years you do develop that sixth sense — there but for the grace of God — so far I have been unscathed. I continually am alarmed by the amount of texting I see continuing — drivers who are texting whilst they are driving — taking phone calls while they are driving, and all other sorts of distractions, including doing their make-up, doing their hair, sipping their coffee and so on, instead of actually taking responsibility for being a careful and considerate road user. I think this is where the TAC campaign fails abysmally. It is a disgrace in terms of the money that is spent. The lack of coordination and consultation with motorcyclists on equal terms, rather than treating them as inane idiots who are having mid-life crises, is an indictment. I strongly object to my taxes and other people's taxes being used in such a negative manner.

There are other things which are of great concern to me — for example, the wire rope barriers. I find them to be a major concern. I was on the way to the Phillip Island MotoGP with my son on his motorcycle on the weekend and found that on a stretch of the South Gippsland Highway there is new type of road safety barrier — I use the word 'safety' somewhat sarcastically — which involves concrete poles with smaller poles on top of them and one strand of wire. I fail to see how they can possibly meet any current safety standards or any consistency in terms of motorcycle-friendly safety barriers. I know that in Europe there have been strong recommendations for a coordinated approach amongst governments and particularly road safety engineers to make barriers more motorcycle friendly. I think strategies such as that do not appear to have any place on Australian roads at this stage, and I have great concerns about that.

I also note with great interest that the commonwealth census continues to ignore motorcyclists and scooters as legitimate road users, which I find quite extraordinary. How accurate figures and data can be supplied when motorcyclists and scooter are even ignored in the national census is something that is just beyond me. I think there is a great need for a far better and far stronger approach that actually involves all levels of government and motorcyclists as well.

There are a number of points that I wanted to make, but I would also like the opportunity for others to ask questions if needs be.

The CHAIR — You have commented on lane splitting and filtering in your submission. Could you elaborate on those remarks?

Mr BLORE — In terms of lane splitting and filtering, I do see it as legitimate, providing it is done carefully and in a considerate manner to other road users and at a very sensible speed. I do it myself. Personally I find it to be the far safer option than actually being stuck sitting in traffic with the risk of somebody who is blithely texting away suddenly looking up and realising, 'Goodness! There is a motorcyclist there. Never mind. There he goes sailing over the top of that car'. I am sorry, but the reality is I feel safer when I am in front of the traffic rather than being stuck in between cars.

Mr LANGUILLER — For members of the public who will be reading the transcript on the website, can you explain the difference, if any, between lane splitting and filtering?

Mr BLORE — My understanding of that would be that I would imagine filtering is where you are filtering in between traffic at a low speed when traffic is either stopped or at quite a low speed, whereas lane splitting, I would imagine, is being at a much higher speed and inherently more dangerous of course.

Mr LANGUILLER — So you are not putting both in the same category in terms of your suggestion that it would be detrimental if we were to ban them? Is there not a difference between them?

Mr BLORE — That is not something that I have suggested, but I would say that, given that it is common practice and works very well overseas, I see no reason with a considered approach that it cannot continue in

Australia. Particularly given our climate and our roads, I think the reality is that motorcyclists and powered two-wheelers in general should be seen as part of the solution in regard to the traffic congestion problems on Australian roads rather than being demonised. This is something I strongly object to as a motorcyclist myself. I am a highly educated and highly qualified person, as many are here, and I strongly resent the implication of being a total idiot because I happen to choose to ride a motorcycle and do something that is environmentally friendly.

Mr ELSBURY — You said that lane splitting and filtering is legal overseas. In what jurisdictions?

Mr BLORE — I am sorry; I am not aware that I said that. It is not something I have covered before.

Mr ELSBURY — You said it works overseas?

Mr BLORE — I believe the lane filtering does work overseas, yes.

Mr ELSBURY — Yes, but what jurisdictions were you referring to? Arguably it works here in Victoria, even though it is not legal.

Mr BLORE — It is not illegal either.

Mr ELSBURY — No.

Mr BLORE — And at this stage I would be horrified to think that we actually would revert to a system where motorcycles and scooters were stuck together with traffic when there is a clear opportunity and the availability of space for them to safely filter through traffic to the head of traffic. They are five times smaller than a car. They usually have far better acceleration than a car, yet it enables traffic flow to be more consistent.

The CHAIR — You have mentioned a range of distractions on the part of other motorists, being drinking coffee, texting and some other others, including mobile phone use.

Mr BLORE — Yes.

The CHAIR — How prevalent would you understand that to be, and to what extent do you see that as being a danger for motorcyclists?

Mr BLORE — Thank you for the question; it is very interesting. As part of my job I have been working in the Kimberleys for the past 13 weeks. Even just in that time in coming back to Melbourne I have noticed — and it appears to be an increasing trend — of motorists completely and blithely ignoring the law and on mobile phones and texting whilst driving, and it horrifies me. As a motorcyclist I am highly vulnerable, as is every other motorcyclist and powered two-wheeler, by people who choose to totally disregard the law. The fact that the TAC continues to do nothing about that particular problem is an absolute disgrace.

Mr ELSBURY — In relation to the attitudes of drivers, would you see any benefit in young new drivers being given some sort of additional training with regard to motorcyclists?

Mr BLORE — I think it would be a very useful idea, yes. There needs to be a recognition that cars inherently have blind spots and a recognition of the vulnerability of motorcyclists. I think that, combined with a more positive educative campaign as to the values of motorcycling as a legitimate form of road use to help ease traffic congestion on the road. Rather than motorcyclists being seen as a problem and being legislated out of existence, as appears to be the case at times, I would like to see something that is far more positive and proactive, so that shared road use can be done in a way that is consistent for all road users — cyclists, powered two-wheelers, cars, trucks, buses and so on.

The CHAIR — Graeme, thank you very much for the submission you have provided. It will be helpful to us in our deliberations and we appreciate the contribution.

Mr BLORE — Thank you. I appreciate the time.

The CHAIR — Phil, your evidence will be recorded by Hansard. Your contribution has the benefit of parliamentary privilege. You will get a copy of a proof version of the transcript, which you should return to us

with amendments and then it will be placed on the Web. Should there be any in-camera comments — that is, confidential remarks — we can take them into consideration as well.

Mr LEMIN — Thank you. My name is Phil Lemin.

The CHAIR — Do we have your contact particulars?

Mr LEMIN — I believe so, but I am happy to give them after. My background is as a paramedic for 29 years, working in rural areas. I am also a motorcycle trainer and part-time first aid trainer. For a long time I had been trialling a motorcycle-specific first aid course and in 2009 I went to the United States, where I attended a seminar held by Accident Scene Management Inc. When I looked at their program I realised that these guys had something quite valuable that had already been trialled since 1996, so I negotiated to bring those courses back to Australia.

In road safety there is lots of emphasis principally on prevention, but our angle, from the Bystander Assistance program, is the normal military-based system that you should always have a plan for when something goes wrong. So that is where our Bystander Assistance program comes in. What we are aiming to do is encourage motorcyclists to take an active role in the management of a motorcyclist accident.

There is a number of programs. There is a basic program, we have an advanced program, and we also have a program which is designed to educate the emergency services — paramedics, police and firemen — about the specifics of motorcycle culture and motorcycle injuries. One of the aims is also to personalise motorcyclists as someone's brother, dad or sister — that sort of thing.

The program has been developed since 1996. What I liked about the program was that it was very simple, with good knowledge that could be applied to motorcycle accidents. Because our instructors are all motorcyclists first before we consider their medical training, as was mentioned earlier, we have riders telling riders what to do.

The core of the training also differentiates between normal first aid which is being taught everywhere and the specifics of motorcycle trauma. Motorcycle trauma is not best served by common first aid practices. Common first aid practices are designed primarily for heart attacks, et cetera. They do not take into account the specifics of motorcycle trauma. I believe in the submission we made mention of a lady in the US who was a very experienced nurse, who, with the injuries she suffered at the accident scene, if standard first aid procedures were applied to her, she would have died. She is now an instructor with us, so it has real benefits. I teach standard first aid, and in teaching standard first aid using the current techniques you always have in the back of your head that if you come across a motorcycle accident this is not going to be the right thing to do. But that is the way first aid is being delivered at the moment. There were big changes to make it simpler, but again they have made it harder; the outcomes for motor cyclists are not as good as they can be. We have set up Accident Scene Management Australia, which is a not-for-profit public company, and our plan is to introduce Bystander Assistance program around Australia.

The instructors have, firstly, to be motor cyclists; lead instructors have to be paramedics or nurses; and assistant instructors have to be at least advanced first aiders. But the main priority is they have to be active motorcyclists. There is lots of stuff I could go into, but principally our role is teaching people what to do when it does go wrong.

Standard road safety covers all the other aspects. We also have a road guardian program, which has been developed in the US, which identifies the six areas of motorcycle road safety, including first response. That is a program that rewards best practice, so if you become a road guardian you have to agree to be representing best practice in motorcycling, and you get a patch in recognition. All riders who have completed the course get a patch similar to this. In Wisconsin where the course started from, the paramedics actually look for those patches at motorcycle scenes. The idea is as we get more people out there trained, if you have come down with your mate, if people arrive and they are wearing the patch, they will know what to do, so you can delegate jobs for each person to do. We also make the point that even at a fatality there is lots people can do — in scene preservation and traffic control, which are very important issues — and that benefits all of us as motorcyclists. Are there any questions?

Mr LANGUILLER — In the clinical sense, what would you propose to do differently to what is currently being done?

Mr LEMIN — In first aid CPR has become the fix everything model for anyone unconscious, not breathing. For motorcycle injuries we teach helmet removal, when and where. We also teach what is called jaw-thrust airway control, which has been around for a long time, but it has been taken out of first aid because it is a higher skill for people to learn. What it allows is that we lift the jaw so that the neck is not flexed, and 10 per cent of motorcyclists have spinal injuries. There have been some other courses around, but principally the only time you would remove a helmet is to do CPR. CPR is good if your heart has stopped, but if your body is damaged, your heart will stop because it runs out of oxygen, runs out of blood or it is damaged itself, so we are bringing back in the tier of helmet removal, jaw thrust and oxygen, and it may just increase the survival rates, and that is not taught in current CPR. Current CPR is that with anyone unconscious, not breathing properly, it is straight onto CPR, and you are virtually pumping them dry.

We also teach the mechanism of injuries — the four types of motorcycle accidents and the types of injuries that you could expect from that. We also teach effective communications with the emergency services. It is a program that has been pretty well chiselled and it is quite practical. We have had trial classes in Australia just to make sure that it transferred across, and they picked up the concept really well. Most of the students in the class come to us and say, ‘The more people that do this, the better off we all are’, and that is the principle behind it, with more of us being trained out there. For places like the Yarra Ranges, the Alpine Road and the Great Ocean Road where we like to ride, the ambulance response is an hour, an hour and a half or 2 hours. If you have people riding in those areas who have the skills to make the accident scene safe, it is a win for everyone. As a paramedic the first thing you have to do when you arrive at the scene is to make it safe. If you arrive at the scene and there is traffic control done, someone is looking after the patient and communications are being done properly, you can go and do your job straightaway. I attended a local safety seminar. The local policeman said, ‘I don’t want bikies taking over motorcycle accidents’. That is not really what we are about. It is just about making it safe and preparing the scene. People can come in and do their job and it is a better outcome for everyone. It is a very practical and simple thing. That is when I sat in on the seminar — —

The CHAIR — Phil, I will just interrupt you. You have 1 minute. We have time for one more question, I think.

Mr TILLEY — Just quickly, earlier today we heard from Professor Russell Gruen from the Alfred. When it comes to motorcycle crashes, one of the things he raised was early intervention. I certainly appreciate the submission that you have given us today. In relation to the Victorian Auditor-General’s inquiry into the heightened incidence and non-recognition of off-road motorcycle accidents, with the number of heightened incidents of motorcycle crashes and injuries from off-road — —

Mr LEMIN — They are exactly the same principles. We need good care at the scene, good communications and even preparing the scene et cetera. As a paramedic I was involved in quite a lot of off-road incidents where I had to get helicopters, et cetera. Helicopters are really good, but a lot of the time they cannot get into places. We teach skills such as normal first aid — that is, not to move anyone. We teach you how to move someone off the road if you have to without injuring them. It tackles the tough questions that first aid does not.

Mr TILLEY — I think with the limited time we have we should follow up and have some more conversations with you, Phil

The CHAIR — A 20-second question.

Mr ELSBURY — How many people have you trained, and do you train non-motorcyclists?

Mr LEMIN — We have trained approximately 50 people in Australia; we have only been going a few months. Eighteen thousand have been trained in the same course in the US. We can train non-motorcyclists. There is a big difference between trauma and the standard first aid practices. With horse accidents and those types of things, again there is high-speed trauma. That is the difference.

The CHAIR — Thank you for your time.

Mr Mastoris, you have heard the preamble, so you can cut to the chase.

Mr MASTORIS — My name is Epaminondas Mastoris — Nonda for short. I want to begin by thanking committee members and staff for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I come with the greatest of humility. My background is that I am a blue collar worker, and I come as a husband and as a father. My daughter is here — 12-year-old Sophie — and the reason she is here is that I have just got her riding trail bikes as well just to get her into it. I put in a submission previously, but I am not here to talk about the submission; it is just a recap of other issues outside the terms of reference which I feel are important and should be taken into consideration.

I ask for the committee's understanding, and I ask that you accept my apologies that because I prepared late last night there is some material I have not had time to make copies of. I am happy to submit it at a later date.

The CHAIR — If you can get it through to John, he will look after you.

Mr MASTORIS — I would like to begin with why I am participating. Basically it is for two reasons. One is that recreational riding is a passion of mine. I used to ride the road regularly; it was part of my life. It was on the Reefton Spur. The speed limit on that was reduced in January 2010 and it changed me as a person and as a rider. I felt like something had been stolen from me. I understand there have been incidents there, and we can get into that a little later. The other issue that got me going was a piece on *A Current Affair* where a woman was photographed by a speed camera approximately eight times on EastLink for being just a few kilometres over the limit. That got me a little upset; I do not know why. I just happened to be watching, not for that particular reason, but I could not understand how someone could be penalised that many times and why it took eight times for her to be notified. That is a lot of infringements before someone gets notified that their behaviour is not doing well. The second thing, I think, was it did not seem too much over the speed limit. They were not too clear on how much over but it was less than 10 kilometres on a five-lane freeway or three-lane or whatever it was.

The other reason I am here is because I do have a care for motorcycles and people who ride motorcycles. I am hoping that the committee can come up with a balanced solution to any issues that it does come up with through the process. I am a believer of building upon strengths and not overhauling any system, such as the GLS or whatever. So I ask the committee to please consider this when making any recommendations regarding the proposed new GLS, the graduated licensing scheme.

Last of all, I believe in freedom and the right to self-determination. I believe they are two very important items. Frankly, if we cannot fix our problems, then sure others should get involved. If motorcyclists cannot take care of their own issues, then definitely outside intervention is called upon, which I agree with.

Before I begin I would like to seek some clarification on the inquiry process. I noted that some of the submissions from the smaller people, such as myself, were put up online fairly soon and some of the big organisations' were not; they were put up at a later date. I just ask if — —

The CHAIR — We can clarify that very quickly. They had different close-of-submission deadlines. Some of the submissions were 50 pages and required a longer research time line.

Mr MASTORIS — My worry was about whether the submissions of the smaller people were able to influence the larger organisations' submissions. Did they change basically after reading these? Did they have that opportunity?

The CHAIR — We cannot respond specifically to that other than to say there is due process. These are public hearings. All submissions will be on the web shortly, including the transcript from these proceedings, so everyone will have the chance to be informed by the perspectives of other stakeholders.

Mr MASTORIS — Chairman, may I ask that the committee actually look into that process for future reference?

The CHAIR — We can note that. I think it was just a matter of time lines, and the view was to give individuals a chance to reply and just a slightly longer time frame for others. It is not quite a tender process.

Mr MASTORIS — Sure.

The CHAIR — But feel free to advise us as to what you see as some of the concerns having been raised by the staggered process.

Mr MASTORIS — I will. Thank you for that. I will go on. I have got a lot of issues; I think I am going to run out of time, so I am going to cut short. Some of the issues I want to raise, and I do not know if I will be able to raise — —

The CHAIR — Can you speak to the headings? You can get all of the headings down and then you can backtrack.

Mr MASTORIS — Okay. The issues are about Redflex, which is the company which manufactures the speed cameras in Victoria.

The CHAIR — The speed cameras.

Mr MASTORIS — The other ones are the training industry as a group, VicRoads and the TAC. I have got a desired outcomes list which was posted on Netrider; it was a demands list. I have copied that and added to it as well because I thought there were some good ideas on there as well. I would also like to talk about Netrider as well. They are a little bit of an unsung hero in all of this; they need to be highlighted and their benefits to the community need to be recognised and encouraged and fostered and helped out somehow.

The CHAIR — All right. Can I encourage you then to choose the headings and then just go through with the key statements under those headings?

Mr MASTORIS — All right. I will begin with Redflex. I have here the preliminary final report for 2011 for Redflex. Their ASX code is RDF. I am a little concerned about their role in Victoria's road safety if it has influenced any of the submissions of the major players in any way, for this simple reason: I have highlighted some statements in here and there is one statement that seems to pre-empt the Auditor-General's outcome, and that is a bit of a concern to me in that sense. They have also included part of their US operations on how they actually operate — the setting up of committees and a massive marketing campaign. I am wondering if they are maybe influencing people as people are not really aware of what is happening here.

The CHAIR — We will take that as commentary. Redflex, as some of us are familiar with, is the company that operates the traffic cameras. It is based in South Melbourne but operates, through agent or branch affiliations, in the United States and the Middle East.

Mr MASTORIS — I will not raise the comments here but I am happy to highlight and provide them at a later date.

The CHAIR — Please do, if you get the — —

Mr MASTORIS — I do not mean it to be controversial, but — —

The CHAIR — Two minutes to go.

Mr MASTORIS — Okay. The training industry is a little difficult and a bit of a grey area at the moment because the training industry also does the testing. I believe it needs to be separated. Training and testing are two separate issues. Testing should be a competency thing, and that way we can identify the issues much better rather than mixing them all up as one group.

The CHAIR — I take that as a comment on that.

Mr MASTORIS — Yes.

The CHAIR — Noted. Next issue.

Mr MASTORIS — Okay. VicRoads. I am a little concerned about the black spot program and especially in relation to the Reefton Spur. I have been to and fro with VicRoads and I have involved my state member, Jo Duncan, in the issues and the process relating to why the Reefton Spur speed limit was lowered and its enforcement afterwards.

The CHAIR — It was lowered from what to what?

Mr MASTORIS — From 100 to 80 kilometres. The road is a great road simply because there are no side roads that go into it. And, yes, there is debris and there is gravel and it is part of the learning process as well — it enables you to learn to be cautious around there. It is not just a nice, clean road. It is a great road, it has many banks, but it teaches you to be cautious, and that is the great thing about it.

The thing about the 100-kilometre speed limit was that it enabled you to focus on the road and not on the speedometer. When you focus on the speedometer, a split-second is all it takes. That is all it takes. We are humans and we make mistakes. You are riding along and all of a sudden you get the heebie-jeebies — ‘Oh, my God, I am going too fast!’. I look down, I look up, too late, bang, see you later and that can happen at 40 kilometres. It can happen at 30 kilometres; it can happen at any kilometres, because we are all different and we all take different amounts of time to react.

The CHAIR — We will take that as your commentary. Next issue.

Mr MASTORIS — I thank you for that. The issue with the TAC has probably already been raised. Motorcyclists also have other vehicles. They have cars, they have trucks and so they are paying premiums again and again. When it is quoted that we do not contribute enough to our cost, the TAC has to take into consideration that we also contribute in other ways as well. So I ask the committee to consider that when it comes to its findings.

Overall I believe the TAC is not very effective. I believe it has become a little bit political. Why? I do not know. I can think of two lines which I have put in my submission. We should probably change it and clear it up. We should probably get rid of the board as a recommendation and appoint a manager. It would be a massive cost saving. They can focus on insurance and they can leave the safety up to a possible new commission to be set up which just focuses on safety and can do everything at an arms-length distance where there is no confusion with insurance or any conflict there whatsoever. I think that is a structural issue there. Again with the licensing, it should be separated. I think it will go a long way to help.

The CHAIR — Good.

Mr MASTORIS — In closing, I am worried about the way data is presented and the reinventing of data. As many people have raised in other submissions I believe there must be some sort of standardised method there for recording. I mean one of them that we looked out read as ‘per billion kilometres travel’, and I am thinking, ‘How did we get to that?’.

Mr TILLEY — Good question.

Mr MASTORIS — Is the sample so small that we have to go to ‘per billion kilometres travel’? That is the worry here, and that is really a concern of mine. The committee could somehow make some recommendation that we go to some standard form of measurement.

The CHAIR — Thank you. We have had other submissions.

Mr MASTORIS — I also want to make the comment in closing that high speeds in other modes of transport are recognised as a good thing. The Premier, Ted Baillieu, was in China, I believe, looking at the fast trains at 400 kilometres an hour. Speed must also be taken in context in the sense that there has to be a balance somewhere with speed limits and travel times and exposure. Exposure has not been one of the big things, but the less you are on the road, the less exposed you are and the less exposed you are to risk, and that has to be taken into consideration. I am not saying we need to have massively high speed limits but there must be a balance somewhere in between.

I am very thankful for this process, because I think this is the first time we are addressing this properly and hopefully we can thrash it all out and find some balance, some middle ground there, and build upon the strengths rather than reinvent the wheel. We are at a very slow rate — —

The CHAIR — Now I think you have had a good run.

Mr MASTORIS — I am getting passionate. Sorry. My apologies.

The CHAIR — We might need to wind up there. We can take a copy of your submission which we will go through.

Mr MASTORIS — You have a copy of my submission already, and if the members like, I can produce all this stuff. Before closing, I need to raise one thing which I have forgotten.

The CHAIR — Perhaps you could sit down so we can fairly allocate time to other people. Should we be left with time in a minute, you can return and bring your daughter as well.

Mr MASTORIS — Thank you. I want to thank committee members for their time.

Mr TILLEY — Do not underestimate the contributions that have been made by each and every person; they are truly valued. I cannot speak for the whole committee but for myself. Do not for a second understate what you are saying. It is very important part, to me, as part of this committee.

The CHAIR — The next person to speak will be Laurie Park.

Mr PARK — Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Laurie. You are aware of the preamble.

Mr PARK — My name is Laurie Park. My background is that I worked for 12 years as a paramedic for south-eastern region Rural Ambulance Victoria. I have been riding motorcycles since I was 12. I am a trainer. I have trained people in motorcycle riding, car driving and first aid. I have done driver training of paramedics for Rural Ambulance Victoria. I am here tonight to promote my belief that training can solve a lot of these issues. Training in any area helps to achieve the outcome we are looking for. I am also here as a part of the Accident Scene Management bystander assistance program. This program was brought into Australia by Phil and we are developing it together.

When we are teaching people these classes we talk to them about the outcomes. At the start of the class we put to them, 'You are riding your motorcycle on the Great Alpine Road, somebody falls off, the paramedics are 2 hours away, what are you going to do?'. We know that a lot of the problems with road accidents are due to the fact that if people do not know what they are doing, they become panicky and they become aggressive. When the paramedics turn up they can be aggressive towards the paramedics or the police because the victims and bystanders are quite stressed about the whole matter. Our accident scene management program is all about how as bystanders we are going to present this scene in the best possible condition for the paramedics and the police when they turn up. I am also a volunteer with the SES, so I have a fair understanding of the Australian Interagency Incident Management System.

Part of our program as we teach people is to ask, 'If something has gone wrong on your trip with your motorcycle, how do you manage it?'. We introduce the first aid. We ask them to consider, 'How do you manage the traffic flow? How do you deal with the psychology of stressed people? How do you give everybody on the scene and involved something to do to keep them active, keep their mind on the job and make a positive contribution to a good outcome for the patient or patients?'. We do this in a lot of ways. The first is to take them through the program. As Phil described, we teach them how to deal with trauma, how to deal with motorcyclist-specific trauma. A lot of first aid courses, as Phil said before, are based on occupational health and safety requirements for the workplace. What has happened over the years with these courses is that they have been dumbed down to get results at the cheapest price because people have to get them through. We are moving this course back to — 'Fair dinkum, this is trauma, this is hard work, we are going to teach you what to do', and we do that. The students at the end of the day come out with a level 2 first aid certificate which helps them in their profession anyway and in their life. We also teach them a bit about scene management. When the ambos or the SES turn up, who do you talk to?

This is part of the AIIMS program. We are introducing in the first aid program the principles of the AIIMS program so that the victims and the bystanders understand why they talk to that particular police officer or that particular SES person so that they can manage the scene effectively. We promote the course's first aid training but we also introduce a lot of preventive strategies. We tell them, 'If you are going on a trip along the Great Alpine Road, be aware of your medical condition. You are 54, you are not 25. Do you need to take into consideration planning of the route for the day?'. We talk along the lines of informing people that most

motorcycle crashes happen between 4.00 and 6.00 p.m. on a Saturday or a Sunday afternoon. Why does that happen? That happens because us blokes who are in our 50s and 60s think we are 25; we get out and we have a good time but fatigue sets in. Diabetes is starting to catch up with everybody. We make people aware of this program.

Mr LANGUILLER — I am 54. Is there any reason why you chose 54 and not 55 or 56?

Mr ELSBURY — It is a message, Telmo.

Mr PARK — The part of this program we promote is about road safety and accident prevention as well as what to do if something goes wrong. As part of the training program we have some quite explicit videos of what happens when you do it wrong, and we find that people who have done the course ride much more safely after they have done the course than before. Basically I am just here to promote that. I am a great believer that training solves a lot of problems. Some people question whether rider training is good. Yes, rider training is great. Some bureaucrats will say, 'Where is the evidence?'. To that I say, 'Anyone who has had surgery, do you believe the surgeon should be trained and have regular updates?'. Yes, they do, so motorcycle riders should have regular training, be encouraged to do more rider training, first aid training, what to do, how to keep their heads about what is really happening. Are there any questions?

Mr PERERA — Who funds this program? How do you get funding, or is it run by volunteers?

Mr PARK — Right now we charge for the course. The course is based on a \$220 fee, which is a pretty standard level 2 first aid fee. We have just received notification that the TAC will fund training for 100 Ulysses members, so we will be initiating that over the next few months. As it is early days, we are looking for more opportunities to attract funding for training because I think training is the answer to so many of the issues we have with road safety.

Mr ELSBURY — You were saying that motorcyclists should get regular training. What about other road users?

Mr PARK — I think all drivers should have regular training.

Mr LANGUILLER — I accept the proposition of training, but I am cognisant of the costs associated with it and the capacity for it to spread right across the community given the growth there is in relation to the usage of bikes of all types. Is there any role you see for volunteers, clubs, independent organisations, community grassroots organisations, others, as happens in other jurisdictions?

Mr PARK — The example that comes to mind straightaway is that as a Ulysses Club member the club will give me a \$50 refund for doing an approved rider training program or an approved first aid program. There is a lot of scope for training. A lot of the training we have done comes from clubs like the Harley Owners Group, the BMW Motorcycle Club or the Ulysses Club. Promotion amongst clubs, because it is peer group pressure, does help a lot.

The CHAIR — You mentioned that you had some graphic video footage. If any of that is able to be dissected and sent through to our committee to review, we are happy to do so under a caveat that it is not to be shown further afield. It may be that we will put together a cut at some stage for a launch that we can attribute to the source.

Mr PARK — We have got some very good stuff from the States of motorcycles crashing into cars where one of the two combatants has done the wrong thing.

The CHAIR — It could be useful for a later purpose when we have worked through the logs of our report.

Mr PARK — I understand.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much for your time, Laurie.

Mr PARK — My pleasure.

The CHAIR — The next person will call is Mr Bill Tassigiannakis.

Mr TASSIGIANNAKIS — Bill Tassigiannakis from Malvern East. I will supply contact details later. I am basically here twofold. One is as the parent of a son who is a recently new motorcycle rider. I am also here as an industrial chemist/engineer in the petrochemical industry. Through discussions with my son about his motorbike riding skills and the whole practice of riding, I started thinking about some of the safety aspects. I will be fairly brief.

The first two points I had were in relation to adequate levels of training, and they were covered by previous speakers. Once riders have had their initial training for their learners permit, they are then on the roads on their own for three months-plus before they go for a probationary licence and another 12 months after that before they go for a full licence. The question came to my mind about the possibility of using and incorporating first aid information on the impacts of collisions not only for motorcycle riders but also drivers, so that they are more aware of this. My son's comment is that car drivers should understand the need to look out for motorbikes. This also relates to the dangers of texting, mobiles and drinking coffee while driving. I will not labour that point.

The area I would like to flesh out is that L-platers are supervised by a fully licensed person during 120 hours of driving, which has to be recorded. That is not feasible for a motorcycle rider. Wearing my industrial hat, there should be some sort of an electronic monitoring or tracking device for recording how long a person has been on a bike, the duration of the ride, the location and the speed. This is not for infringement purposes but so that data can then be taken back to a trainer or an authority to show whether the rider has done an adequate amount in the three months, and then they would continue on with training. That may help between the L-plate and the P-plate and also between the P-plate and the full licence. Potentially that might also help riders with getting affordable insurance because the premiums seem ridiculous at the early stages. My son has found it unaffordable. That is something that could be discussed between the Motorcycle Riders Association and insurance companies.

The CHAIR — Could you just flesh that comment out a bit more?

Mr TASSIGIANNAKIS — To insure a motorbike, if you do not have two or three years experience, depending on the size of your bike they either will not insure you or it is an exorbitant amount that young riders cannot afford. My focus is on young riders as opposed to people in the 50-plus age bracket. I am not a motorcycle rider, but it is a large cost and young riders should be covered by some insurance to help them if they have accidents.

Mr TILLEY — He might not find much cover, but it is still going to be dear when he is a proficient rider.

Mr TASSIGIANNAKIS — I totally understand, but I think the whole aspect is: how do you record useful data that helps them in making good decisions about riding safely? That sort of fits in with that whole notion. That whole thing about recording 120 hours of safe driving could possibly be used via some sort of a mechanism like that. The other element I wish to highlight is the idea of wearing safety gear.

I have taken note of John's comment earlier about his business. Again this is more directed to young riders and putting in place a mechanism where they might be deemed to have a conditional licence. In the first 5 or 10 years they should have full gear: helmet, coat, pants, shoes and gloves. I see a lot of people now riding to and from work with a helmet and jacket but wearing standard jeans and black shoes. That is a bit of an issue, I think. Just as I have a conditional licence because I am short-sighted, even though I have been a driver for 30 years, the licences of motorbike riders of a certain age bracket could be deemed conditional upon wearing safety equipment. I do not know how that could work, but that is something to make a comment on.

It is important from an industrial safety point of view that riders be seen both day and night. People can be trained to look out for them, but sometimes this is hard, especially at dusk. I recommend that they have fluorescent markers on their clothing. These should not be light, flappy things but should be designed into the clothing just as safety jackets are worn by construction workers on roads to make sure we look out for them. They can include reflectors. I will donate a night glow device that picks up light. If we switch the lights off, it will glow for about 8 hours if it gets a full dosage of radiation.

The CHAIR — Mr Tassigiannakis, we could almost do a test here.

Mr TASSIGIANNAKIS — Can you switch off the lights?

The CHAIR — We might do a test. We have got time to do so.

Mr TASSIGIANNAKIS — It is based on inorganics. If you switch the lights off, you can see that it does glow, so the incorporation of that on jackets et cetera at night would help to give drivers a chance to see riders. They could be used on road barriers as well. That is the fourth point I want to make. I will donate that device to the committee.

The last point relates to wire rope barriers, commonly referred to as cheese slicers, which people mentioned earlier. They concern me, given that I have a son who is on the road. The reason these barriers cause harsh injuries is that riders can get entangled in them. These wire ropes are about 19 millimetres in diameter. When you have 100 kilograms of human being thrust at 100 kilometres per hour against those, they act as blades to severe and crush bone and tissue. An elastic device could be affixed to the three or four wire ropes so that the energy is dissipated across a large area, and riders and their bikes would not get entangled and intermeshed in the barrier. It still acts as an elastic device for cars to be deflected back onto the road, but it prevents serious injuries. It does not have to be black. It could be yellow so people can know where an accident has occurred and go and repair the barrier and the damaged elastomer. The cost of construction of the barriers is probably high. The additional smaller cost of putting on this elastic device is minimal compared to the cost to community, family and friends of an injured motorbike rider. If they can bounce off and not get their arms ripped or back broken, it is probably a worthwhile investment.

The CHAIR — Two minutes for questions.

Mr TILLEY — You were talking about being a parent of a new rider. How old is your son?

Mr TASSIGIANNAKIS — Twenty-one.

Mr TILLEY — Does he drive a motor vehicle as well?

Mr TASSIGIANNAKIS — Yes.

Mr ELSBURY — Has he mentioned that considering he now has his motorbike licence he is more aware of motorcyclists at all?

Mr TASSIGIANNAKIS — Yes. He is a fairly sensible rider in that respect. He is concerned about what drivers do. He is also concerned about other people who ride motorbikes who do not wear their safety gear. That has been the issue. That is why we have had the discussion at home. I am using some of my industrial experience to see whether or not we can do something about unavoidable on the roads, especially with these wire ropes et cetera.

The CHAIR — I know there are other people in the room who have an insight into those barriers. I might just elicit a quick 30-second comment from Mr Codognotto in relation to his understanding. He has spent a lot of time looking at the wire rope barriers.

Mr CODOGNOTTO — The suggestion to dissipate the energy by using a flap is good. Your problem is, as I said before, that we are the wire rope capital of the world. The cost to do that is astronomical. You are better off replacing the wire rope with a smooth concrete barrier. It would cost a fortune to cover all the wire rope. We cannot find out from VicRoads how much wire rope they string up a year, let alone how much is throughout the state. We suspect it is more than anywhere else in the world.

The CHAIR — Thank you for that comment. It gives rise to another debate which I do not want to go into, but I do want to list your immediate comment as an idea noting that some of the injuries occur at the anchor posts of the wire rope. We will not debate that here at the moment.

Mr Tassigiannakis, thank you very much for giving your time. We wish your son all the best on the road. There is a bit of expertise around here as well, should he require any additional tuition.

Mr TASSIGIANNAKIS — Thank you.

The CHAIR — We have another person here, Mr Shaun Lennard, who I call next.

Mr LENNARD — I am Shaun Lennard, and I am the chairman of the Australian Motorcycle Council. I thank the committee very much for the invitation to come and speak here this afternoon. I am from Hobart, and

being from interstate I am not here to profess to be an expert on the specifics of motorcycling or road safety in Victoria. I am here primarily to draw the committee's attention to some experience from other states and also some things that are happening overseas.

In addition to being the chair of the AMC, I will just put it on the record that I am also the chair of the federal Motorcycle Safety Consultative Committee. I am a member of the leadership team of 33 900 — The Australian Road Safety Collaboration and the Australasian College of Road Safety. In Tasmania I sit on the minister's road safety advisory council. I am here purely to represent the AMC, but I just wanted to make the committee aware of those other involvements that I have.

The two things I wanted to particularly draw the committee's attention to are two events that took place in 2008 and the associated reports from those. One was an event hosted by the OECD and its International Transport Forum, commonly referred to as the Lillehammer workshop, which was a workshop on motorcycling safety hosted by the OECD in June 2008. Out of that there was a two-day meeting involving around 100 invited people — motorcyclists, government representatives, researchers, police and road engineers. There were a number of recommendations out of the Lillehammer workshop, but one of the most important ones, particularly for this context, and I will read from it, was that:

It is a fundamental motorcycle safety requirement that —
motorcycles —
should have a place in overall transport policy and infrastructure policy/management.

What that key principle was talking about is that the fact that motorcyclists exist as part of the road network needs to be taken into account in transport policy and planning rather than putting the infrastructure in place and then dealing with motorcycling purely from a road safety perspective. Even though that is a recommendation from three years ago, it is not only in Australia; many governments are still quite slow to pick up on this. I am pleased to say that the International Transport Forum has recently put in place a working group to try to progress some of those recommendations, so at least hopefully we will see some action.

I will give one example — and it is a very recent one — of how this is not progressing in Australia. Just in the last month the National Transport Commission released a paper entitled *Smart Transport for a Growing Nation Project* for public comment. This document is some 70 pages long and contains all sorts of facts, figures, detail and reports of research, but this paper, *Smart Transport for a Growing Nation Project*, does not contain the word 'motorcycle' once. I think that speaks for itself. This is something that the Australian Motorcycle Council is addressing with the NTC, but it is an example of how, in Australia, taking into account motorcycling transport policy and planning is largely overlooked in many sectors.

Another one of the recommendations from Lillehammer was for the development of improved motorcycle training programs. Here in Australia there is a move to try, through the National Road Safety Council, to hopefully have a standardised motorcycle graduated licensing system across the country. I am aware that through VicRoads the Victorian government had commenced some work in terms of reviewing graduated licensing here in Victoria. I guess my encouragement is that the Victorian government would in fact look to the national process rather than work in isolation on improving motorcycle training in Victoria. I wrote in a column in *2wheels* magazine a few months ago that by definition there cannot be eight best practices for motorcycle training in Australia, yet we do have eight different systems. So we are very much pushing the development of the standardised system.

Another one of the messages out of Lillehammer — and this has also been reflected in comments from other speakers this evening — is the need for safety messages to be conducted in conjunction with riders and rider groups. The problem is, and we have had some examples with one or two of the TAC's messages, that with perhaps the best intention if a message is developed which riders just turn off from straightaway or think, 'That doesn't apply to me', then the effect is lost. We have heard one of the examples, and I will repeat it again. The message that motorcyclists are at 38 times more risk of having a serious injury — what does that in itself actually mean? It may be a statement of fact in terms of interpreting some statistics, but is that a message to motorcyclists? Is it a message aimed at discouraging motorcyclists or discouraging people from taking up motorcycling? Or is it actually a message that is aimed at other road users and is saying that motorcyclists are people you need to look out for? That is a message that the motorcycling community in Victoria and

Australia-wide just turn off to. Again, the emphasis from the Lillehammer workshop was the need to work in conjunction with riders and rider groups to develop messages that will be accepted.

Another one was in relation to road design, and this ties in with the safe system approach developed both in Australia and overseas. This ties back, though, to the need to take motorcycling into account in terms of policy development. In terms of the safe system — so you have safe road users, safe vehicles and safer roads — we have heard others talk in here about barriers, but all sorts of road obstacles pose a greater risk for motorcyclists. When you are changing infrastructure or putting in infrastructure that is purportedly to be to improve safety, if it is actually to the detriment of other road users, then it creates greater risk. One example which has not been mentioned here today is the increased placement of pedestrian refuges. They are great for pedestrian safety, but the steel hoops that pedestrians can hold onto when they are standing in the middle of the road pose a significant risk both to motorcyclists and to cyclists. If you are riding a pushbike and you hit one of those barriers at 40 kilometres an hour, you are likely to have a very serious injury.

The other event that took place in April 2008 was the Australian government's Motorcycle and Scooter Safety Summit. There were a number of recommendations out of that: the graduated licensing that I have mentioned and the need for education programs to be targeted at both motorcyclists and other road users. That encourages the shared road environment rather than having one group — say, motorcyclists — who are responsible only for their own safety. The message that has been conveyed for many years is that there is one road environment and we need to share the roads. That is a two-way arrangement in terms of motorcyclists and other road users.

Probably the last comment I would make is that it would be good to see if the Victorian government — and perhaps this can be something that is facilitated through the report from this committee — could encourage greater work between the jurisdictions in Australia rather than these recommendations from Canberra, for example, many of which have gone unaddressed, or individual states working on individual programs alone. To acknowledge the benefits that has had, there have been improvements in motorcycle safety in many of the states, so the casualty rate across the country has declined. Whilst we are concerned about motorcyclists being 15 per cent of total serious injuries, in fact when we look at other OECD countries Australia is in a better position than many other countries, where you see motorcyclists in some cases as high as 25 per cent or more of serious injuries. There has been some good work done in Australia, and I believe that if the jurisdictions were to work more closely together, in conjunction with consulting with riders and rider groups, we could see significantly greater improvements in Australia.

Mr ELSBURY — You were talking about the need to standardise the national graduated licensing system. After 6 hours on a bike I was handed a learners permit. I can now go and ride a motorcycle out on the road, having had only 6 hours experience. What do you think of that sort of training?

Mr LENNARD — There are many concerns about the fact that there are different training regimes in different states. I am not a training expert myself. I have spoken to trainers who do believe that in 6 hours people can be provided with the skills they need to ride safely on the road. It is 6 hours more training than I had 33 years ago. One of the key things is —

Mr ELSBURY — You obviously have not seen me riding, but that is fine!

Mr LENNARD — You haven't seen me ride, but I would not want that on the record.

Mr ELSBURY — It is now!

Mr LENNARD — One of the questions about the training is how people are prepared to go into the road environment, so you do your 6 hours training in a closed range, but that does not give you any actual exposure to the real road environment. One of the challenges that professional trainers tell me about is that it is very difficult to take out somebody under training conditions when they have literally only had 4 or 5 hours of learning how to ride a motorcycle. To put them out in a real traffic environment under the watchful eye of their tutor itself creates nerves in the person and difficulty there. I am not sure which group you were trained through, but it is about ensuring that the ranges that are used have a greater reflection of a realistic road environment rather than, say, being able to ride at only 20 or 30 kilometres an hour during that 6 hours of training.

Mr ELSBURY — That is what I did — a breakneck speed of 30 k. Bingo!

Mr LENNARD — Pull into second gear?

Mr ELSBURY — Second gear, yes. I even accidentally made it into third.

The CHAIR — We might have almost run out of time on that point. Thanks very much, Mr Lennard, and thank you too, Mr Elsbury, for your comment, to be equal.

Mr ELSBURY — Not a problem.

The CHAIR — We could put the timer on. We will get two times two back. John, if you would like to come back, we will have a bell at 1½ minutes. The next speaker is John Karmouche.

Mr KARMOUCHE — For the record, whenever I take some of my customers out who have expressed a desire to go out and get a motorcycle licence or they may be talking to me about returning to riding, I often counsel them to have a look at what their lifestyle is and whether they can fit a motorcycle into their lifestyle. I counsel them on the expense they have to undertake to buy protective clothing and do the necessary rider training, and I encourage them to identify whether they are actually going to be able to get out and ride the bike at all. There are a lot of people out there who simply cannot fit a motorcycle into their lives. They are the type of people who I personally would not want to see go out on the roads.

Secondly, what we have not spoken about is returning riders. I just want this on the record for the committee. Time spent with a qualified rider/trainer is never wasted. When you have been riding for a long time you develop bad habits. You may think that you are good at cornering, that you are good at braking and that your road craft is pretty good, but then you go and spend some time with a rider/trainer and he says to you, 'John, you are doing just about everything right, but I did not see your head go from left to right. I did not see you scanning the road', and you go, 'What do you mean?'. He says, 'Look, you are not paying enough attention to what is around you' — 'Oh, really?'. It is just a bad habit that I happened to pick up that was picked up when I attended a rider training course many years ago that sank in, and I am overdue to attend a course and spend some time with a qualified rider/trainer and have my bad habits identified. That is the sort of advanced rider training that I think we should be aiming at and encouraging. We should be marketing to riders that it is time they went and had a check-up. Time spent with a rider/trainer is never wasted. With that, I will close.

The CHAIR — Nonda, would you like to come forward and round off with 2 minutes? Would your daughter like to come forward as well to sit with her dad?

Mr MASTORIS — I thank the committee members again for this opportunity.

The CHAIR — We have lost our timer, but you have 2 minutes.

Mr MASTORIS — I just wanted to sum up. I have gone through points, and I will try to sum up basically in the last 2 minutes. I believe Victoria's system is a good system. It may need tweaking and improving, but at the end of the day I believe the results are fairly good for the amount of people who are actually out there riding. As a percentage, I have always been pushing the survival rate. On a positive note, motorcyclists have a better than 99.9 per cent survival rate, and that is a fact. Cars have a better rate, but it is still above 99.9 per cent, so we should not lose sight of that fact.

It would kill me to have people discouraged from such a great thing — to find it too hard to get involved in — when riding a motorcycle is a great thing. It is a very good experience. Sometimes I work hard and I get worked hard at work, and I need to get on that thing. Mentally it just helps me right out. It just fixes my whole week. I go out for a ride on Sunday, and I am a different person. If I do not go out, I am frustrated and moody. I do not know if it is particular to me or particular to everyone, but riding these things needs to be accessible. It needs to be promoted, because it is good for mental and physical health.

It is safe in my belief, but as with anything it can be abused. Anything can be safe and unsafe at the same time. The degree of safety is a different issue altogether, but if I did not believe it was safe, I would not allow my daughter to ride — and she is 12 years old. We ride legally at the little track at Bacchus Marsh. She is at the stage now where she is really getting sick and tired of riding around this little track again and again. She would like to take it further and maybe explore some of the forest trails with her dad. I would ask the committee to also take that into consideration, simply for the health benefits and the experience. I believe at the end of the day that

young Sophie here will be a good road user. She will learn judgment and balance, which are two very important skills, and these things need to be trained and entrenched at a very young age. I believe that will be a benefit for the community.

The last thing I want to raise, if the committee will allow me, is Netrider. I am a returning rider, by the way, and when I returned I had no idea of internet forums. I am not of that age group, but someone put me on to Netrider. The amount of resources available on that website is phenomenal.

The CHAIR — The committee does regularly review the Netrider site.

Mr MASTORIS — It does? Excellent. I ask the committee whether it can help Netrider in any way and make it better. Accessibility is good because it is very cheap to access, but it could be promoted somehow with the TAC, VicRoads or the new safety committee, if one is formed. They could get people pointed to it. The Spokes website goes nowhere near and does not compare at all to Netrider. For learners it is a great resource. Any question is basically answered, and it is national.

Mr LANGUILLER — As a matter of interest, you are not 54, are you?

Mr MASTORIS — I am 47. I stopped counting.

Mr PERERA — What is the bike that Sophie rides?

Mr MASTORIS — Believe it or not, Sophie has an imported Chinese bike. A lot of people put them down for quality, but my first motorcycle was a Honda and I can tell you now that this little imported Chinese bike is up there. It has a few minor issues, but it is up there for quality. I took her little bike around the mini-bike track and gave it all I have, and I could not break it.

Mr TILLEY — What are you riding?

Mr MASTORIS — An old 1998 model ZZR600. It has clocked over 120 000 kilometres, but it fits me like a glove, so I cannot part with it.

The CHAIR — Thanks very much for your time.

Matthew Zammit attended yesterday with a view to speaking today. He had the opportunity to speak on the record yesterday. Are there any comments you would like to make to round off any thoughts you have had while listening to the contributions of people here? If you are going to speak, you can step up and give us 2 minutes just to conclude proceedings.

Mr ZAMMIT — My name is Matthew Zammit. I spoke yesterday and have been kindly invited again to round off proceedings today.

The CHAIR — Could you summarise your expertise and the reason you are qualified to speak here tonight in terms of your motorcycle riding experience and also the incident on 27 December?

Mr ZAMMIT — The reason I came to listen and see the work of the committee, which I commend, and also to speak — and the reason I have a bandage here and here and a new one on my knee — is that late last year I was involved in a motorcycle collision due to a driver performing an illegal U-turn out on Beach Road two days after Christmas in the early evening. I have no memory of three days prior to the event, of the event or of two weeks after the event. I was in hospital for exactly 100 days. I told that to one of my Buddhist Korean friends, and he told me it had some significance, but I do not know. I still attend rehabilitation two days a week, which is where I was today. I still have prospects of more surgery and I have many injuries, some of which I will gradually recover from and some I will have to live with.

It is not a pleasant thing to be involved in a motorcycle accident. It is all fun and games when you are on a trail bike and rolling down sand hills. However, when you smack into the side of a 2009 Kia and then look at the police report a few months later and see you were actually halfway through to the back seat, with the whole door and roof at the side of the car pushed all the way in due to the weight and force of you and the motorcycle, you wonder again how the hell it is that you are there in real life looking at that picture, knowing you were there. It is really not a pleasant thing.

I picked up on a few of the comments that people have made about the TAC advertising and I endorse those comments. I think I touched on it yesterday. It is just aggravating, really. The thing also with TAC ads, as somebody involved who has had road trauma come into my life — and I heard this from other people in rehabilitation — is that they are very upsetting to people, especially those Pictures of You ads. It is really difficult to listen to and watch. Given the impact it has on people who have been harmed by road trauma and people I know who have lost loved ones by road trauma — —

The CHAIR — Just one point I will get you to draw out here to is the circumstances of your condition and your comment as to your culpability in that.

Mr ZAMMIT — Again, because that advertising says that it is up to you, I say, ‘What else could I have done?’. Do not laugh. I was riding a Yamaha 250 Virago. I have over 10 years riding experience but I rode the Virago because, like I think the other gentleman said, it fitted me like a glove. It went as well as I needed a motorbike to go. I was wearing full safety gear and a full-face AGV helmet. I know that a combination of me not speeding and wearing that protective gear is probably why — I said earlier I had a chance to look at that police report as a living person — I have the opportunity to be here today.

The CHAIR — Again, how did the accident happen?

Mr ZAMMIT — A friend and I were riding down Beach Road. A car was parked on the side of the road and it suddenly spun out to perform a U-turn. We later discovered from the police report that the man driving the car, who was a young guy of 23, lived 2 kilometres up the road, so I guess he and his mate in the car wanted to quickly get home rather than go 500 metres down the road to turn into a side street to come back out and safely change direction. He just went across the solid line, which as we all know means you sort of have to do a U-turn. He also did it very quickly. My friend who witnessed the accident and the six witnesses who were involved in the police report all agreed that it was performed so quickly that I did not stand a chance. All my friend saw was my brake light go on, my shoulders come up and begin to do a cross steer, which motorcyclists do. It was just a quick lean to try and do a quick turn out of the way but it fairly much happened in an instant. It was the unluckiest 3 seconds of my life, and every other second after that is the luckiest of my life. My life now is luck.

Going back to those TAC ads, I do not know what I could have done to reduce that risk. But the statement is true; it is up to you to reduce the risks. But it is also up to you, you and you. It is not just up to riders to reduce the risks. It is up to you, the collective Australian youse, to reduce the risk. It is all of us.

The CHAIR — I think the point I would seek to adduce there is that the accident was not due to any culpability on Matthew’s part.

Mr ZAMMIT — That is correct.

The CHAIR — It was a motorist’s error when a U-turn was done in front of him. How many fractures did you have to your skull?

Mr ZAMMIT — I have 14 plates in my skull. The CT scan of my skull after the faciomaxillary surgeon first operated on me looks like a cat has scratched a plastic skull and they have put little bandaids on it. The scratches are of course the cracks and the bandaids are metal plates. All my teeth were pushed in; I am still getting a lot of endodontic work. The dentist did a full-mouth X-ray and nearly jumped away from the screen when he looked at it because I forgot to tell him how many plates I had in my jaw and he wondered what all the white flecks were. I broke two neck vertebrae, I broke ribs, I split my pelvis in half, I broke part of my wrist, which is still undergoing treatment. My right eyeball was burst open and had 20 stitches which then had to be removed three months later while I was fully conscious and having to hold still while somebody came at me with a little pin and tweezers and pulled 20 stitches out. It was a character-building experience! I am somebody who usually faints, and has fainted before, at the doctor’s getting a blood test. I now give myself injections and could sit in an operating theatre and watch surgery. Such was the trauma — not of the accident itself, but medical procedures are a trauma in themselves. Having gone through them I have gotten over all of the squeamish fears I ever had.

The CHAIR — Matthew, thank you very much for your comments.

Mr LANGUILLER — Are you being properly supported by the TAC in terms of your recovery and rehabilitation?

Mr ZAMMIT — It is difficult. What I would say is that if I had caused my accident I would be very appreciative of what the TAC does to support me because I would accept any help as a bonus. Early on the TAC send a lot of brochures to your home address when they know you are in hospital. My girlfriend collected them and brought them to me. They send a lot of forms to your home for you to fill out when they know you are in hospital. It is a bit ridiculous, to be honest. I do not know enough about the TAC to comment too much on them, but my experience has been very difficult. Others I have met in rehab and therapists in rehab, when I tell them of the difficulties I have, roll their eyes and say, ‘Sometimes they are as bad as the accident itself’. It has come to the point now where I regard them as the insurance company representing somebody who nearly killed me, and that is unfortunate. In legal truth it is probably exactly who they are, but in their operating manner they are slowly becoming that as well, and that is unfortunate. But it is, I will say, the best system in Australia — and many acknowledge that — and probably therefore the best in the world. That needs to be taken into account. We cannot be too upset, knowing that we have that. We just need to look at how we can improve things.

The CHAIR — Matthew, thank you very much for your time. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your attendance tonight, including representatives from a range of stakeholder organisations covering the gamut of the views that have been traversed this evening. I also thank Hansard and my colleagues.

Committee adjourned.